

SOLETRON ROLLS OUT BIGFIX AND SEES THE WORLD



CASE STUDY

AT A GLANCE

Soletron, one of the world's largest contract manufacturers of electronic products, has brought new levels of visibility and control over its 30,000-plus PC infrastructure spread out at over 50 manufacturing and administrative locations in 28 countries.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Gain visibility into a worldwide IT network serving 55,000 employees at 50 manufacturing and administrative locations in 28 countries
- “Think globally, act locally” in molding infrastructure solutions to optimize efforts of local administrators while providing central overall leadership
- Take cost and complexity out of enterprise-wide security configuration management processes
- Enable timely, “low-friction” legal and regulatory compliance reporting on IT-related topics
- Prepare the way for greater standardization of desktop system software and hardware configurations



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IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

- BigFix Enterprise Suite installed on 30,000 PCs and servers at 50 locations around the world
- Multi-level delegation of administration arrangements, empowering local administrators to use BigFix to execute company-wide system management actions
- PC inventory information used to identify older generation machines for phase out and replacement
- Managing a third party anti-virus client including providing virus definition files, updates and status reporting
- Preparing a worldwide baseline report on the current state of vulnerabilities, patch status and software versioning prior to a mass remediation program
- Reporting data feeds into Sarbanes-Oxley and internal compliance reporting

RESULTS

- Discovered that Solectron had more computers than it anticipated
- BigFix used to deploy several significant software packages including SAP client, a third party anti-virus client, and Microsoft Outlook 2003



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Information Security Engineer, Solectron

- Simplified patching processes, improving patch coverage and timeliness while reducing excess effort required for a typical patch action
- IT organization gearing up for program to bring greater standardization of server, PC and mobile computer configurations to lower infrastructure cost of ownership

Founded in 1977, Solectron has grown to become one of the world's largest contract manufacturers of electronic products and subsystems. Goods coming off the production lines of Solectron's 50 manufacturing locations around the world bear the brand names of the most well-known companies in telecommunications, networking, computing, automotive, medical, aerospace and defense and other industries. Brand name companies turn to Solectron to access the company's deep expertise in product design, Lean Six Sigma manufacturing using the award-winning Solectron Production System and aftermarket service and repair, while optimizing the supply chain for speed and flexibility at lower costs.

Solectron grew rapidly in the 1980's and 1990's, surfing the converging waves of the high-tech product boom and the opening of previously closed national economies to world trade. Today, Solectron operates in 20 countries on five continents.

During Solectron's rapid growth period, revenues grew organically and through acquisitions, often introducing locally developed IT infrastructure and ways of doing things along with them.

Furthermore, many local operations include systems installed to meet customer preferences.

IT Efficiency Drive

As the electronics industry boomed, this diversity in IT infrastructure was a secondary concern. But when the electronics industry growth slowed, Solectron realized that maintaining competitiveness required more efficient management of IT resources. This involved both streamlining processes and bringing more consistency to system configurations and asset bases.

In 2005, this led to a project to find a security configuration management solution that would give Solectron greater visibility and control over its worldwide IT asset base. Then current methods could not give them an accurate picture of what was going on with the company's IT infrastructure, what software was running on it, its security posture, much less its composition as an asset base.

Following an extensive review of available solutions and a proof of concept exercise in 2005, Solectron settled on BigFix as the cornerstone of its IT asset inventory and management improvement drive. Peter Schwartz, information security engineer at Solectron comments on the evaluation process. "We immediately saw the power of BigFix in being able to give us accurate real-time visibility into our infrastructure. It also showed

us that it had potential to completely change the way we perform functions such as patching systems, distributing and installing software and managing asset lifecycles."

In January 2006, Solectron began rolling out BigFix on a site-by-site basis, working with local administrators to train them on the new system and to demonstrate its value to them. Far from resisting change, local administrators immediately recognized that BigFix would make their lives easier and more productive. By August 2006, Solectron had installed the BigFix Agent on 24,000 server, desktop and mobile computers; with another 6,000 machines in the queue for installation by year end. "It turns out local administrators were an easy sell for BigFix. As soon as they saw what it could do for them, they were instant converts. Once word got around, we started getting emails from sites around the world requesting that we install it as soon as possible at their facilities," says Schwartz.

Infrastructure Census

One of the first missions assigned to BigFix involved getting an accurate census of the computers on Solectron's network, along with information on their configuration details and software

running on them. "The first thing we discovered was that we under-estimated how many computers the company owned," says Schwartz. "We also saw that we were all over the place in terms of what software the machines ran, software versions, and patch status. We weren't terribly surprised about these revelations. After all, getting this straightened out was one of the main reasons we bought BigFix."

As the BigFix footprint within Solectron has spread, the company has steadily ramping up its use of the software to support software patch and update processes, asset inventory and reporting, and software distribution. "BigFix has had a major impact on our patching programs. Actions that used to take weeks now require hours or days," says Schwartz. "We use BigFix to distribute patches to local administrators, and they in turn, use BigFix to complete the installation. With BigFix's real-time reporting, we can literally watch a patch or software update make its way around the globe and install in targeted machines."

BigFix asset inventory and reporting capabilities support a number of management processes at Solectron, including asset lifecycle administration, software distribution and compliance reporting. "BigFix has been instrumental in helping us plan and execute a computer lifecycle management program. We can see which machines are new, in midlife and may need upgrades or

BIGFIX SELECTION AND WORLDWIDE ROLLOUT

maintenance, and which should be next in line for retirement."

Recognizing that patching is a very close relative of software distribution, Solectron has been using BigFix to install a number of mission critical software applications on targeted machines. Schwartz comments: "In the first few months we had BigFix, we successfully installed a new version of SAP client—our ERP standard—on 1,600 machines in Austin, Texas and will be doing the same this autumn on 300 computers in Penang, Malaysia. The SAP package weighed in at 331 megabytes of software for every machine—but the install went very smoothly."

Following up this success, Solectron uses BigFix to install and maintain up-to-date virus definitions for a third party anti-virus client software and expects to use it when it upgrades all personal computers to Microsoft Outlook 2003 later this year. Schwartz comments: "The Outlook 2003 installation will be a particularly intricate project, as it will involve uninstalling and disposing a disparate collection of previous versions of Outlook running on a diverse asset base and replacing them with a standard distribution."



Finally, BigFix provides reports and information that support Solectron's internal management and external legal/regulatory compliance programs. Here, Solectron's IT department uses BigFix web reports to set up login-protected self-service reporting sites accessible to qualified managers at the company. Schwartz comments: "BigFix Web Reports let us set up reporting dashboards and score cards that can be automatically fed with fresh data and viewed by managers without having to task the IT department to do up a custom report for every occasion."

SUMMING UP

The inherently distributed architecture combined with specific delegation and control features has given Solectron a best-of-both-worlds opportunity in managing its global IT network. For the first time, company managers have accurate, real-time visibility and authority over every BigFix-equipped asset on the Solectron network. In addition, the flexibility of BigFix enables them to optimize the efforts of local administrators to tailor management to meet specific conditions and situations. By bringing new levels comprehensiveness, flexibility, speed and visibility to the management of the Solectron IT infrastructure, BigFix has helped align IT with the company's overall positioning as the world's leading resource for fast, flexible manufacturing of high quality electronic end-products.

BigFix: Breakthrough Technology, Revolutionary Economics

BigFix, Inc. offers the IT industry's only intelligent enforcement engine that enables real-time visibility and control of globally distributed desktop, mobile and server computer infrastructures. Built on a revolutionary technology platform, BigFix continually assesses and manages the health and security of enterprise computing devices at the velocity of change.

Without requiring massive investment in dedicated management resources, BigFix automates enterprise-scale malware defense, asset management, software inventory and distribution, vulnerability assessment, policy enforcement, power conservation, and patch management, without compromising network performance, end-user productivity, or security.

BigFix delivers outstanding return-on-investment through slashing IT infrastructure costs of ownership and management complexity while enabling IT organizations to elevate security configuration management from chronic pain point to positive business value resource.